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SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/CEN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/21/2019
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINS](#) [KG](#)
SUBJECT: KYRGYZSTAN PROPOSES JOINT COUNTER-TERRORISM
TRAINING CENTER IN SOUTH

REF: BISHKEK 1199

Classified By: Ambassador Tatiana C. Gfoeller, for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: At a November 13 courtesy call meeting with the Ambassador, Maxim Bakiyev, the recently appointed Director of the Central Agency for Development, Investment and Innovation, requested the U.S. consider creating an international counter-terrorism training center in the southern Kyrgyz city of Batken. Bakiyev said the training center would be jointly U.S.-Kyrgyzstan operated and that it could host trainers and trainees from different countries, including Israel and Russia. Bakiyev argued that the long-term benefits of counter-terrorism and counter-narcotics training would improve Kyrgyzstan's overall security and stability. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) At a November 13 courtesy call meeting with the Ambassador, the Director of the newly formed Central Agency for Development, Investment and Innovation, Maxim Bakiyev, requested the U.S. consider creating an international counter-terrorism training center in the southern Kyrgyz city of Batken. The Ambassador's discussion on the economy and Bakiyev's economic reforms will be sent septel. Bakiyev, the son of President Bakiyev, said that Kyrgyzstan is interested in expanding its security cooperation with the U.S., noting positively the current small scale training the U.S. conducts with the Ministry of Defense and the Kyrgyz National Security Service "Alpha" Special Forces.

¶3. (C) Bakiyev said that U.S. soldiers and trainers would be able to provide long-term counter-terrorism and counter-narcotics training that would increase the overall security of the country. Bakiyev said that Kyrgyzstan would want other countries, such as Israel or even Russia, also to provide occasional "guest" training at the center. Other countries would also be able to receive training at the Batken training facility. Bakiyev highlighted the importance that the center maintain an "international" character, hinting that Kyrgyzstan's neighbors, including Uzbekistan, could object to the training center's location in southern Kyrgyzstan near the Uzbek border area. However, when the Ambassador asked him if he was concerned about "tweaking the Russian tiger's tail" with this initiative, he laughed and responded: "Maybe this tiger is a paper one after all."

¶4. (C) Bakiyev argued the benefits of locating the counter-terrorism training facility in Batken, noting that Batken was a large city in Kyrgyzstan's south, already possessed a military facility on which a counter-terrorism training center could be constructed, and the natural terrain of the area provided excellent training opportunities.

Bakiyev compared the Batken counter-terrorism training center to the recent U.S.-funded construction of the Kyrgyz Special Forces compound at Tokmak outside Bishkek.

15. (C) COMMENT: Batken province is an active area for extremists and terrorists transiting to Afghanistan or Uzbekistan and has been the site of numerous armed attacks and violence in recent years. Supporting and expanding Kyrgyzstan's abilities to protect and secure its southern borders would be beneficial for the region and assist in securing the country's long-term stability.
GFOELLER